

THE MENTOR

"A Wise and Faithful Guide and Friend"

Vol. I

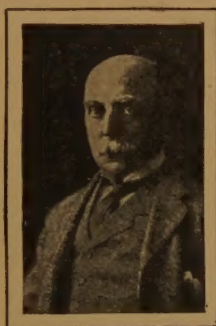
No. 26

AMERICAN LANDSCAPE PAINTERS

GEORGE INNESS

HOMER MARTIN

A. H. WYANT



American Art Annual

THOMAS MORAN

D. W. TRYON

F. E. CHURCH

By *SAMUEL ISHAM*

THE beginnings of art in America were confined almost exclusively to portrait painting. In the earliest colonial times unskilled limners came from the mother country and made grotesque effigies of our statesmen and divines. As the settlements developed and the amenities of life increased better men came, and native painters were found, until about the end of the eighteenth century a portrait school of surprising merit arose, founded on the contemporary English school, and developed men like Copley, Stuart, and Sully. The other branches of painting, however,—history, allegory, genre, still life, landscape, and the rest,—were rarely attempted, and usually with unsatisfactory results.

Probably no artist devoted himself entirely to landscape until 1820, when Thomas Doughty, who was already twenty-seven years old,

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gave up his leather trade and took to painting American views in delicate gray and violet tones, with small encouragement from his contemporaries.

THOMAS COLE, THE IDEALIST

Soon after came Thomas Cole, the real founder of the school, who emigrated to America with his father's family when he was nineteen. He was a sensitive, delicate youth, who suffered much in his wanderings while trying to support himself, at first by his trade of wood engraving, but most of all after the chance meeting with an itinerant portrait painter led him to take up art.



Metropolitan Museum of Art

THE VALLEY OF VAN CLUSE, BY THOMAS COLE

It was not until he came to New York in 1825 that his merits were recognized and his difficulties ceased. Some small canvases that he exhibited were quickly bought, and from this time until his death his popularity steadily increased. The quality of Cole's work owes much to his own character, and perhaps also to his early English bringing up. He was an idealist rather than a realist. He cared less to reproduce the beauties of the nature around him than to awaken high, moral thoughts. It was not for the pleasure of the eye, but to suggest profitable musings on the grandeur and decline of nations, the transitoriness of life, the rewards of virtue after death, that he painted the "Course of Empire," the "Voyage of Life," and the rest. He was the founder of a ro-



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THE ÆGEAN SEA, BY F. E. CHURCH

mantic school, which may be traced even down to the present day. The succeeding artists did not indeed paint allegories; but they put the main interest of their pictures in the strangeness or beauty of their subject, rather than in rendering ordinary scenes with personal feeling.

CHURCH, PAINTER OF NOBLE SCENERY

The best known of these followers was F. E. Church, who was a pupil of Cole—and the only pupil that he could properly be said to have had; for Church lived and studied in his house for years. While he showed no desire to imitate the mystic subjects of his master, Church cared little for the common world immediately around him. He seems to have thought that the nobler the subject the nobler the picture, and he ransacked the whole earth for its beautiful, strange, or impressive scenes. The luxurious vegetation of the tropics, the isles of the Ægean Sea, the Parthenon, icebergs, volcanos,—he painted them all, set off by sunset, clouds, thunderstorms, rainbows, or whatever else would enhance their beauty, and he painted them well. He was the best artist of his school; much better than Cole, whose careful studies of real scenes are often well done, but



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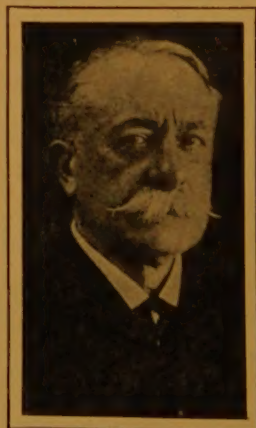
THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS, BY ALBERT BIERSTADT

whose workmanship degenerated rapidly when, leaving nature, he entered into the realm of pure imagination.

The succeeding men who took Church's viewpoint and sought subjects for their exceptional beauty or majesty had an additional impulse given to their imagination by the discovery of such subjects in their own country. Church painted no important picture of his own land; but when exploring parties began to enter the great West they were accompanied by artists eager to set down marvels no less striking than those of the tropics or of Europe.

ALBERT BIERSTADT

The foremost of these artists was Albert Bierstadt, who gave to the public its first impressions of the vastness of the Rockies and all their strange fauna, the buffalo, the big trees, and the rest. The public, both educated and uneducated, enjoyed and admired the pictures which offered it a new impression of the grandeur of its country and flattered the somewhat uncouth but real pride of the time.



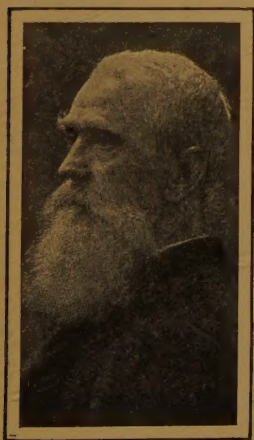
ALBERT BIERSTADT

AMERICAN LANDSCAPE PAINTERS

Other men besides Bierstadt accompanied the explorers of the West,—Whittredge, Wyant, Samuel Colman, and others,—but though they painted the plains and the Rockies they soon deserted them for other subjects. One man, however, now a veteran of his profession, has remained faithful to his early ideals.

THOMAS MORAN

Thomas Moran, who was one of three brothers, all distinguished in art, came with them to this country from England in 1844, when he was seven years old. He continues to our day the traditions of Church; not directly, for his training came from an entirely different source, but by his natural preference for Nature in her more striking and impressive forms. A trip to the Yellowstone as early as 1871 furnished him with a series of subjects peculiarly his own; but, while he has always found matter for his brush



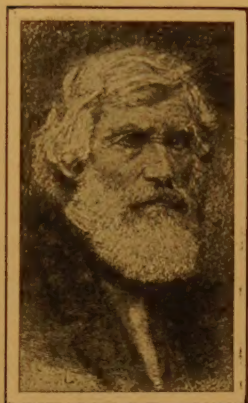
THOMAS MORAN



LAKE OF THE WOODS
BY THOMAS MORAN

in the marvels of the great West, he has added to them many of the most beautiful scenes of Great Britain, Switzerland, Venice, and the Orient, rendering them all with a sure facility and brilliance that make his canvases recognizable at a glance.

In contrast to these men, who sought to give interest and dignity to their work by choosing imaginative or strange, far-sought subjects, may be placed those whose interest was rather in the familiar native landscape that lay about them, who found in it beauty sufficient for their needs if only they could fully express the emotions with which it inspired them. The two schools are anything but rigidly separated. The idealists made careful studies from nature, and the realists attempted excursions into



ASHER B. DURAND

allegory or scenic beauty; but the fundamental difference of the point of view is sufficiently marked.

The two founders of our landscape schools are typical examples of the two temperaments. Thomas Cole, born abroad, with much of the sentimentality of Europe of that time, was a dreamer, sensitive, shy, living in his visions.

THE TRUTH AND FEELING OF DURAND'S ART

Asher B. Durand, on the contrary, was of sturdy Huguenot stock, one of the many children of a farmer who cultivated his land on Orange Mountain, but whose ingenuity made him also a watchmaker, silversmith, and skilled mechanic generally. His son, after some boyish efforts at engraving, was apprenticed to that trade, and rapidly became by far the best engraver in the country, both prosperous and skilful. His masterpiece is the "Declaration of Independence," which holds its own today as a most creditable production. He was still an engraver when Cole came to New York, and was one of the first to encourage him and buy his pictures. At this time Durand, though an older man by some five years than Cole, had not yet begun to paint. When he did some ten years later, in 1835, his first productions were portrait heads admirable in their delicate draftsmanship and sure, fine characterization; but he soon abandoned these for landscape, and for the latter part of his long life devoted himself entirely to it.

Durand's landscapes, like his portraits, showed his training as an engraver in their accurate and minute drawing. Contrary to the general practice of the time,



IN THE WOODS, BY ASHER B. DURAND



Metropolitan Museum of Art

A GLIMPSE OF THE SEA, BY A. H. WYANT

seen. Yet, for all his love of detail, he does not lose unity, and the color is true to the soft, warm haze of summer, and the shadows keep their local atmosphere.

he painted many of his large canvases out of doors in face of nature. His love for nature, combined with his training as an engraver, probably accounts for his almost invariable choice of full mid-summer daylight for his pictures, when vegetation was at its fullest and all its details could be minutely

THE HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL

Durand's landscapes were popular, and there grew up about him a school of painters treating nature much as he did. They loved the country that they visited in their summer excursions, and like him they painted Lake George, the White Mountains, the Hudson, and so there grew up what has been called the Hudson River School. Durand was old when he began painting, and his followers were of a younger generation. Kensett was probably the best of them. He worked less from nature than Durand; his detail has none of Durand's tranquil thoroughness, and his shadows are apt to be rendered by a facile generalization of brown. However, he made a decided advance over the older master in representing all aspects of nature, all seasons and all times of day, with a special leaning toward sunsets.



A. H. WYANT

Of the others of the school there is space to recall only a few names at random,—Whittredge, McEntee, Bristol, Sanford R. Gifford, Cropsey, and the rest. They were mostly sincere, hard-

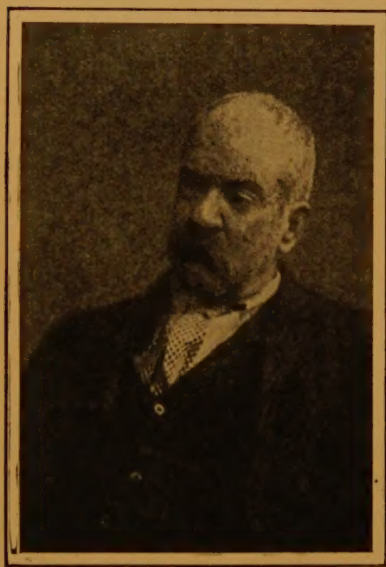
working painters, and very charming, worthy men personally. They won for themselves a social position in the old New York of the 60's and '70's greater and more important than any other artistic group has enjoyed in this country. Their paintings were also admired and bought for handsome prices, and as a whole they were prosperous. Time has dealt rather hardly with their fame. Though all of the men whose names have just been cited left works that may still be seen with pleasure, yet as a rule the pictures of the school were thin, laborious, and timid. There

was no rich, strong handling of the pigment, no decorative quality to the composition, no massing of light and shade, and no revelation of individual temperament and emotion.

WYANT, MARTIN, AND INNESS

Approaches to these qualities were occasionally made; but to find them the general rule we must go to the men who are now conceded to be the culminating masters of the school,—Wyant, Homer Martin, and Inness.

Of these Wyant holds closest to the traditions of the school. He had a larger sense of composition, a completer mastery of technic, a freer handling, and a finer draftsmanship. He represented with infinite refinement the heaped up summer clouds and the smooth, delicate tree trunk beyond which the widespread landscape was



HOMER D. MARTIN

seen; but on the whole it was only a culmination of the qualities of the school and awoke no opposition. With Martin and Inness it was different. They succeeded in giving to their landscapes a deeper note of personal emotion and feeling than any of their predecessors. Both were men of exceptional spiritual and mental endowment. Their characters were formed not in a conventional model imposed by their surroundings, but by much solitary meditation. Both had begun by painting in the general style of the Hudson River School, and both found the result unsatisfactory.

Martin's desertion of the old traditions consisted largely in a change of workmanship. Instead of the thin, smooth coating of pigment general at the time, which he himself had practised in the beginning, he used a thick impasto, laid on with a heavily loaded brush or even the palette knife. The color, too, was not used in unbroken tones, but drawn



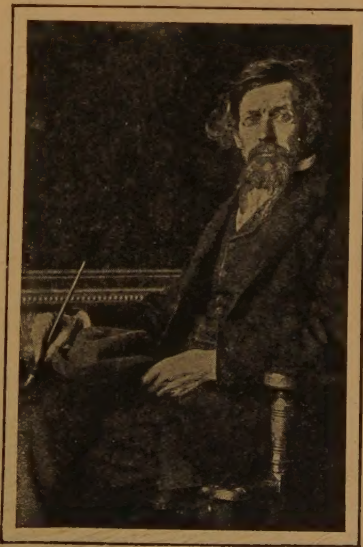
SEPTEMBER AFTERNOON, BY GEORGE INNESS

shows greater variety. He early felt the monotony of the old school, its lack of certain qualities that he found in engravings of European landscapes, and he used to take the prints with him when he went sketching, to try to discover wherein their merit consisted. He studied nature continually, living with it, so that at last he knew its moods and methods by heart. Toward the end of his life he painted much from memory. A landscape painting, perhaps originally sketched from nature, would change under his brush much as the scene itself might under changing lights or varying seasons. The sky filled with clouds, then cleared again, the sunlight spotted the grass or the shadows stretched across it, while the trees turned from the green of summer to the russet of

and blended together in streaks and spots, which gave it quiver and vitality. Apart from the method of painting, the manner changed also. Detail, so admired by the public of the day, was more and more simplified. The composition resolved itself into a few strong masses of light and dark, the relations between which became more and more balanced and subtle as the little incidents disappeared. His pictures in this latter manner are not very numerous, for he could not paint when he was not in the mood; but the best of them make a profound impression by their strong simplicity.

THE ART OF INNESS

Inness was a much more prolific painter, and his work



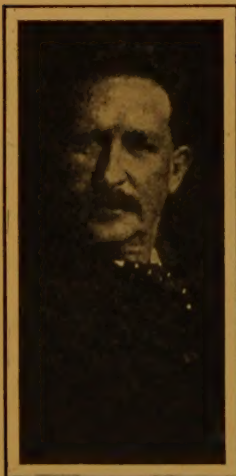
GEORGE INNESS

AMERICAN LANDSCAPE PAINTERS



Metropolitan Museum of Art

ACROSS THE FIELDS, BY D. W. TRYON



American Art Annual

D. W. TRYON

autumn. Naturally work of this later period, much of it left unfinished, is very unequal in merit; but at its best it marks his highest achievement rather than the more carefully planned productions of his middle life. It is more vital and more subtle; but all of Inness's work except his very earliest reflects the inner nature of the man. It has none of the dignified melancholy of Martin, which has also at times its note of revolt. Inness is never trivial: he keeps his seriousness; but he is never sad. Nature is to him always beautiful, always kindly.

With Wyant, Martin, and Inness our early landscape school reached its culmination. Their lives all continued after the end of the Civil War, they even did their best work after it; but they belonged to a school formed in other surroundings. After the war conditions changed. The country was less isolated, intercourse was easier, wealth had increased, and foreign paintings, calculated to show the deficiencies of native work, became increasingly common. The budding artists were no longer willing to pick up their art by their own

AMERICAN LANDSCAPE PAINTERS

exertions, aided by occasional counsel from their elders or such inadequate schools as the country then furnished, but departed in ever increasing numbers to the famous schools of Europe.

The difference was not that the earlier painters had ignored Europe. They traveled to see the masterpieces of art and the beauties of nature in foreign countries; but they were on the whole contented with their work and proud of their native school. The younger men absorbed enthusiasm for foreign workmanship, and adopted foreign standards.

THE SENTIMENT OF TRYON

D. W. Tryon is an example of this new spirit at its best. His sentiment, if not so deep and strong as Inness at his best, is yet more delicate and subtle. That is due to a difference of temperament; but the way in which the picture is developed is a matter of training. With Inness the first thing was to express somehow his feeling, and then the canvas was worked over until it was got into construction; with Tryon the draftsmanship was fundamental and indispensable, and the sentiment was built upon that. One may say of our recent landscapes that they show a construction gained from the

study of the nude and a handling adapted from the best foreign models. This education has greatly raised the average of our art; but a few men of the older time had strength and feeling to work out a training for themselves more personal and perhaps as permanent as that of the later day. Time tests all things, and its verdict cannot be foreseen; but it is doubtful if it will place any of our modern landscape artists before Martin or Inness. Among these modern landscape painters are men of such talent as H. W. Ranger, Bruce Crane, and J. Francis Murphy, without mention of whom no article on American landscape painters would be complete.



H. W. RANGER



BRUCE CRANE



J. FRANCIS MURPHY

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AMERICAN LANDSCAPE PAINTERS *George Inness*

ONE

GEORGE INNESS is said to have painted more good pictures than anyone else ever painted. At any rate, he painted more than he himself could remember. A landscape supposed to be Inness's was brought by the man who owned it to the artist's studio, with a request to know if it was genuine. Inness looked at the

painting carefully for a long time. "Leave it, leave it," he finally said. "Perhaps I shall recall it."

Inness spent the greater part of a long career in the neighborhood of New York. He began studying at the age of fourteen. He received very little instruction; but for the most part found out through his own hard work and drudgery all that a painter must know about drawing, colors, and the mechanical side of art. Then, during a few years in Italy, the glorious landscapes, the historic traditions, the art of old masters, all combined to develop in the artist, who was then but a young man, that quality of imagination which was needed to make him a genius.


Yet neither his knowledge of art nor his imagination could have placed him foremost among painters of American landscape had it not been for the energy that was above all characteristic of his nature. Inness would often work fifteen hours at a stretch. Friends wondered at his endurance, and even more at the speed with which he painted. He saw one day two pictures by Rousseau, the famous

French artist, and remarked to a friend, "I could paint two of those a day." Next day, to prove his point, Inness painted two canvases in the French style, and later sold them both to one man.

An incident that happened at Montclair, New Jersey, shows how little he valued his own finished work. When out walking one day he was overtaken by a thunderstorm, and was so impressed with its fury and grandeur that he rushed home to paint it while the memory was still fresh. Arrived at the house, and unable to find a canvas large enough for his idea, he took down a ten-foot picture of Mount Washington which he had painted years before. In two hours the mountain scene was replaced by a striking representation of the storm just over. That picture, with the outline of Mount Washington still traceable by ridges of paint, now hangs in the museum at St. Louis.

Men of great energy often wear themselves out early in life; yet George Inness kept on painting to a good ripe age. At sixty-nine he died in Scotland, where he had gone for his health.



F all our great artists the most unsuccessful financially was Homer Dodge Martin. His work was not popular; he never won any prizes; and indeed he was long forced to depend for a living on the assistance of his wife. Like many other early American artists, he was self-taught. His father, a carpenter in Albany, New York,

was not easily persuaded to let the boy follow up a natural talent for painting. Martin first tried carpentering, shop-keeping, and architecture. In each case his desire to draw pictures was too strong for him,—boards, paper, blank walls, were decorated with landscapes,—until his employers found it necessary to discharge the young artist. At last a sculptor of the time pleaded for him, and Homer was permitted to paint.

Martin insisted on doing everything in his own way, and he did not get far at first. His admirers can find hardly more than an occasional hint in these crude early works of the great skill that this artist afterward acquired. Nevertheless, the wealthier people of Albany, who were proud of their artist, bought a number of Martin's canvases.

It was not until he moved to New York in 1862 that this queer genius had a really hard struggle to live. His habits were irregular, he dressed badly, and generally made a poor impression. The great Whis-

tlers said, introducing him, "Gentlemen, this is Homer Martin. He doesn't look as if he were; but he is!" Revolutionary ideas and a keen, cutting humor made him as many enemies as friends.

Strangely enough, he chose quiet, calm landscapes to paint. He was attracted to the Catskills, Adirondacks, and White Mountains, and in Europe preferred tranquil scenes along the upper Thames and in Normandy.

Homer Martin seldom painted direct from nature; but would sketch in his notebook and jot down color memoranda. Less surprising, therefore, than it would seem at first is the painting of two famous pictures in 1895, when he was all but blind. "The Adirondacks" and the "View on the Seine" rank with his best work. Two years later he died.

Martin was not appreciated during his lifetime. The few pictures that he did manage to sell were purchased by his friends. Today few of his important pictures can be bought at any price.



AN OLD CLEARING By A. H. WYANT Metropolitan Museum of Art

AMERICAN LANDSCAPE PAINTERS *A. H. Wyant*

THREE



ANY a great artist has begun life in some distasteful branch of trade. Wyant worked for a harness maker. He was born and brought up at Port Washington, Ohio, and though he is said to have sketched flowers and leaves on the kitchen floor during his childhood, and later to have used his spare time in sign paint-

ing, he had no real opportunity either of showing his own talent or of seeing pictures by other artists until he was nearly twenty.

A visit to Cincinnati, where he saw the work of George Inness, may be considered the beginning of Wyant's artistic career. From that time on, his one ambition in life was to be a great painter. He set out for New York City as soon as he could get money enough together, found Inness, and received from the master painter both help and encouragement. Inness saw great possibilities in this Ohio boy.

On his return Wyant made studies of the Ohio Valley, where no artist of any account had ever painted. He threw into his work all the energy and enthusiasm of which his poetic genius was capable.

The year 1865 brought the opportunity to which Wyant had long looked. He was able to go abroad, and study there for awhile in Karlsruhe and London. But the result was somewhat disappointing; for

he failed to get the inspiration he expected from contact with European painters.

Another disappointment was in store for him when he undertook, like Moran, to explore the West. Indeed, it was more than a disappointment. He was treated so brutally by the leader of the expedition that on returning he suffered a stroke of paralysis. Although he never entirely recovered, Wyant would not give up the old determination to be a great artist. His right hand useless, the invincible painter learned to use his left, and with it did more perfect work than he had ever done with the other.

It is a fact which cannot be too much regretted that Wyant reached the end of his life before his genius could be perfected. He himself knew that it would be so. "Had I but five years more in which to paint," he said, "I think I could do the thing I long to." In the mystic coloring of his Adirondack scenes we catch glimpses of the thing he longed to do.



AMERICAN LANDSCAPE PAINTERS *Thomas Moran*

FOUR

THOUGH a true American, taking great pride in his chosen country and her art, Moran is English by birth. When he was but seven years old the boy's parents settled in Philadelphia, where he received his education. That he should soon show remarkable talent was not at all surprising, as the family he belongs to

has produced nine distinguished artists.

Thomas Moran was apprenticed to a wood engraver, whose art he mastered before starting to work in color. Engraving has in fact occupied a considerable part of his life ever since, and his etchings are among the best that have been done in America. He has also great skill in water color; though he is best known for his oil paintings.

Success came easily and quickly. Moran went with a government exploring expedition to the West, where he wished to sketch the unknown Rockies. A poetic imagination, coupled with an eye trained to note and remember the smallest details, could not fail to bring home valuable material. The artist's enthusiasm was aroused by that bigness in the scenes before him which now brings tourists from all parts of the world. The magnificent coloring of rock

and mountainside, forest and canyon and swift river, was faithfully observed, to be rendered in the most famous of Moran's paintings.

The United States government chose two of his pictures, "The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone" and "The Grand Chasm of the Colorado," to adorn the walls of the national Capitol. The artist received for them \$10,000 apiece.

Moran must be considered one of our self-taught painters; for, except during his first visits to Europe, he received very little instruction. He is an American painter of American landscapes. Yet he has also made several excellent paintings of the sea. He likes best to paint the sea with mountains near at hand in the picture.

He has made several prolonged stays in Europe; but is most fond of his home at East Hampton, Long Island.



AMERICAN LANDSCAPE PAINTERS

Dwight William Tryon

FIVE



HE world stands ready to admire a painter whose trees bend beneath the gale, their tops all but whipping the torn, gray, low-driving clouds, and whose lightning and rain and frightened animals aid the dramatic impression of violent storm. Yet the world often forgets the sort of skill that can show a light wind barely

swaying the straight, stark woods of March, or can bring home to everyone the chill and the melancholy of oncoming frost in an autumn evening. When trees toss we know that the wind is up. Running cattle suggest thunder. But in "Twilight—Autumn" there is nothing to tell us why we seem to hear the far-off moaning of the November wind. Tryon makes one feel the spirit of scene and season.

At the age of twenty-five Dwight William Tryon first set up his studio. Before this he had been a clerk in a bookstore at Hartford, Connecticut. At seven he began studying at the École des Beaux Arts under Daubigny and De la Chevreuse. Two of his pictures were exhibited at the Paris Salon. Since then he has won prizes everywhere—a gold medal of the first class at Munich in 1891; thirteen medals at the Chicago exhibition, 1893; and many

more. He is a member of the National Academy.

Some of the best of Tryon's earlier work is included in a series of landscapes and marines which he painted for the hall of a collector in Detroit. One of his series, "Dawn—Early Spring," is remarkable for its simplicity. The foreground is a low, marshy field, back of which an almost uniform line of trees runs the whole width of the horizon. Yet this painting, with all its simplicity, is so full of imagination that a beholder feels the dawn and the bleakness of March sinking irresistibly into his mind. It is Tryon's method to conceal his art, and make us feel the emotion in a picture without knowing why we feel it.

All his paintings have the same subtle simplicity. Among the best known are his "Winter" and "A Scene at New Bedford."

HEART OF THE ANDES By F. E. CHURCH Metropolitan Museum of Art



AMERICAN LANDSCAPE PAINTERS

Frederick Edwin Church

SIX

MANY people like to find something unusual or striking in a picture. To these the paintings of Frederick Edwin Church make a special appeal. The range of Church's art is wide, and covers subjects chosen from many parts of the world. Before cameras were invented nobody could tell, unless he went there himself, just what a

tropical forest looked like. Therefore, when Church wanted to paint something mysterious and wonderful he traveled to South America, among the mountains and through jungles of which few people in northern countries had any idea. It was not strange that critics should praise the landscapes he painted on his return,—scenes by moonlight across a luxuriant growth of palms and creepers, or high mountain peaks with animals of the tropics lurking about the foreground. So enthusiastically were his canvases received, both at home and abroad, that the young artist soon revisited those regions, and made further studies, which met with equal success. The greatest of his South American works is "The Heart of the Andes."

Feeling at length that he had learned enough of one country, and desiring a wider field for his genius, Church turned northward. "Niagara Falls from the Canadian

Shore" is a picture known to everyone. A journey to Labrador gave him new opportunities, quite the opposite of what he had experienced in the tropics. We have the result in "Icebergs," one of his best canvases. For him nothing was too difficult. Soon afterward Church left America, made southern Europe his study, and went on from there into Palestine. "The Parthenon," a picture showing that magnificent temple in the middle distance, with no other object prominent enough to lessen the majesty of its ancient ruined architecture, is the most famous record of this European period in the artist's life.

Church painted on very large canvases, and was painstaking to the smallest detail. A pioneer in the landscape art of America, he had all the directness and bigness of the pioneer. "The Heart of the Andes" and the "Niagara" give him a permanent place in the history of American painting.